



Chapter 2

THE SITUATION

HISTORY

Lands in the Carrizo District were purchased by the Federal Government during the late 1930's when drought and "dust-bowl" conditions existing in the region caused their abandonment. Revegetation efforts on land unsuited for cultivation were begun by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service. Administration and management responsibilities were transferred to the U. S. Forest Service in 1953.

Past use and misuse of the land are revealed by land form and vegetation. Soils exposed and loosened by farming and over-grazing were blown and sifted by ever present winds. The fine soils buried fences and accumulated around farm lots and other locations. These sites became readily discernible as ridges and mounds containing early successional forms of vegetation. Yucca (*Yucca glauca*), a primary invader of old fields and farm yards, served as an important soil stabilizer (Fig. 3).

Blowouts were also created, many of which are still active in the region (Fig. 4). The aridity of the region has made revegetation a difficult and frustrating process, but one which is being accomplished through substained effort.

VEGETATION

Cover types in the scaled quail range of southern Baca County are highly variable. Sand sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*) and yucca exist in near pure stands or are mixed in infinite proportions and densities on sandy soils. The presence of numerous forbs and grasses has been influenced by variations in erosion, grazing, reseedling, and climatic conditions.



FIG. 3. Symbolic of a rugged and mistreated land in which the scaled quail lives—Yucca plants provide valuable cover for upland birds.



FIG. 4. An active blowout six miles east of Campo. Annual vegetation covering the dunes on the leeward sides of blowouts attract scaled quail brood coveys.